

# MINGLED WINE

ANNA BUNSTON

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MINGLED WINE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

“LEAVES FROM A WOMAN’S MANUSCRIPT”

*(Out of print)*

# MINGLED WINE

BY

ANNA BUNSTON

LONGMANS, GREEN AND CO.

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TO THOSE AT WEST HILL, EASTBOURNE, AND ALL  
THE FRIENDS OF MY SCHOOL DAYS

“What happens to oneself happens to another.”  
—*De Profundis*.

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THANKS ARE DUE TO THE EDITORS OF

*The Academy,*  
*Country Life,*  
*The Guardian,* and  
*The Saturday Review,*

FOR PERMISSION TO REPRINT SOME OF THE VERSES



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# MINGLED WINE

## HARMONIES

NO hammer fell, no heavy axe was heard  
When Earth was formed, but Alleluias rang  
And all the morning stars together sang.  
And when God would redeem her through the Word,  
Angelic throats and wings moved as one bird  
In melody ; and still where water falls  
Or forest creature to its fellow calls  
Or leaf is fluttered, there is music stirred.

And yet the fragrant lily silent blows  
With head bent down to catch the bee's low bruit ;  
So may my tuneless spirit as she grows  
Be bowed before the Lord, responsive, mute,  
Obedient as Ilion's walls, that rose  
In soundless beauty to the sun-god's lute.

## “LOVE KINDLES GOODLY FIRE”

COULD I, like Petrarch, take a single word  
And, winging it with rich conceit and rhyme,  
Send it for ever like a magic bird,  
Singing down all the avenues of time—  
Could I, like Dante, to one lovely praise  
Make tributary Paradise and Hell :  
Or weave, inheritor of Landor's bays,  
Round one sweet sound, one rich peculiar spell—  
Could I, with Shakespeare, for one darling fame  
Become immortal, challenge farthest years,  
Defy all time—I still must hide thy name,  
By fate ordained to silence and to tears !—

Yet shall that name be praised when angels see  
How, like a gracious spell, it works in me.

## LOVE

" Its absolute incapacity of offence."

—WALTER PATER, in *Gaston de Latour*.

WHY wilt thou so laboriously excuse  
Thy long and often absences from me ?  
Or when did I thy wanderings accuse  
Or plant a hedge about thy liberty ?  
I must have waited all thy faith to prove  
If I would love thee for thy faithfulness ;  
I loved because it was my will to love  
And my love stands in my will's steadfastness.  
Thou sayest thou hast won a second youth,  
Right well I know it, thou hast stolen mine,  
But never shalt thou filch away my truth,  
Which stays my own although all else be thine :

Then knock no more, who canst not lose the key,  
Since thee I love, and not thy love of me.

“AD EXTREMAS TENEBRAS”

I HEAR the lapping of the waves of death  
In Stygian wells,  
I see the white-winged moths that bring the breath  
Of Asphodels ;

I feel how steeply slopes toward the night  
This awful track,  
And see the narrowing disk of life and light  
When I look back.

The flowers of Enna falling from my hand  
Already die,  
I follow dumbly to the starless land  
Too tired to sigh.

Yet if, oh dread Aidoneus, one like me  
May ask a boon,  
I pray it may not be Persephone  
Who meets me soon :

For in her heavy hair there still are gleams  
Of former gold,  
And in her sombre eyes lurk hopes and dreams  
Of springs untold.

## GOD'S FORESTRY

She doth but winter in thy realms, O Dis,  
Not nest with thee,  
Her regal mouth still haunted by a kiss  
Would weary me.

But let there meet me one, too poor for scorn,  
Dim-eyed and hoar,  
Wan as Demeter when she sat forlorn  
By Celeus' door.

And let Tiresias come, who, shrinking, knows  
A woman's heart,  
To guide my feet where Lethe coldest flows,  
And pitying yew its darkest covert grows  
Far off, apart.

## GOD'S FORESTRY

THERE is a tree so dear to Heaven  
That God would send new sun, new rain  
Ere He would let one sapling wither,  
One single seed be set in vain :  
It is the tree of Humble Courage,  
And grows but in the soil of Pain.

## LOVE'S DENIAL

NAY, snatch me not from the brands  
Where Demophoön like I lie,  
Till for thee the god shall be born,  
For thee the woman shall die.

Laid here by immortal hands  
I endure the fiery ruth  
To bring thee ambrosial balm,  
To win thee perpetual youth.

Then leave me among the brands  
Till their red strength enter me,  
And out of the heart of the flame  
I will come as a god to thee.

## “THE CHILDREN OF THE DESOLATE”

“She shall have fruit when God visiteth Souls.”

—*Wisdom of Solomon.*

A WOMAN bowed herself beneath her pain,  
Her own wan hands propped up her heavy head,  
That might not find a more endeared bed  
Nor pillow on a human breast again.  
“Some sow in tears to gather golden grain,  
And such a mother’s agony,” she said,  
“Yet strong men pity it, but far more dread  
Are lonely women’s throes, and all in vain.”

And when her fragile hands had overthrown  
Th’ Apollyon of grief, she took her place  
And played her minor part with patient grace,  
Nor knew that she had offspring of each moan—  
Of Pain begot, conceived in Pain alone,  
Yet stamped with every trait of Beauty’s race.

## IN MAY

HOW were our spirits moved when first we felt  
Love's freightage on the lips !  
They heaved beneath that burden as the sea  
Beneath the Tyrian ships.

## “THE SLINGS AND ARROWS”

AH ! now I know I am not yet accurst,  
Since Life has deemed me worthy of his might,  
Allowing all his veteran rage to burst  
Upon my head. On then ! Renew the fight !



## BRUGES

O BRUGES, upon the waters,  
How fair thy turrets throng !  
And all thy roofs are pictures,  
And every bridge a song.

And softly glide thy barges  
By poplar-bordered quays,  
And sweetly from thy belfry  
Float poems on the breeze.

Thy gentle sons could pencil  
Old legends of the Rhine,  
St. Ursule and her maidens,  
Scenes quaint and scenes divine ;

And happy hands still fashion  
Things beautiful and rare,  
And time with thee, is music,  
And art with thee, is prayer.

O Bruges, upon the waters,  
All grace to thee belongs,  
And all thy roofs are pictures,  
And all thy bridges songs.

“WHO CAN TELL HOW OFT HE  
OFFENDETH?”

WHENEVER humbly I begin  
To search my heart and own to Thee  
My great perversity and sin,  
Thou hinderest me.

How can I tell what evil drifts  
Beneath the bench, behind the door,  
When, everywhere I turn, Thy gifts  
Fill all the floor?

Miserere is not said  
Ere Benedictus is begun ;  
O visit not upon my head  
What Thou hast done !

## CARE NOT FOR KEYS

CARE not for keys : no stranger can intrude  
To scan the parchments of a private grief,  
Nor shall thy best and nearest interfere.  
The wave may whisper to the darkling wood,  
The wind betray thee to the hunted leaf  
But never tongue of man to mortal ear.

## EASTER

LIGHT streams from out the open tomb,  
Yet the cross is on the hill ;  
New radiance hath dispersed the gloom,  
But the shadow falleth still.

## RĀDHA TO RĀM LĪLA

STILL in the moonlight gleam Himālayan snows,  
The sacred Tāj with pearly radiance glows  
Between her towers and cypress sentinels,  
And still the Jumna to the Ganges flows.

The orange garden scents the evening breeze,  
The same grey squirrels haunt the tamarind trees,  
And where white oxen work the creaking wells  
About the oleanders hum the bees.

Still in the ghāts the funeral fires are red,  
The city echoes where the bridegrooms wed,  
And women plait the wreaths of marigold,  
And pour the nard and balsam on the head.

And still, Rām Līla, still I keep my pain,  
And all the sounds and scents of earth are vain  
Till kisses ripen on a dead man's lips,  
And till a tongue of ashes speaks again.

## IF YOU WERE HERE

THESE flowers would lose their wistfulness,  
And dance to celebrate our love,  
This twilight stay her wing to bless  
If you were here !

With your two hands for priceless cup  
This brook would yield the wine of life,  
And we in ecstasy would sup  
If you were here !

I should not feel the pain of years  
Vibrating in the thrush's song,  
Nor watch the west through falling tears  
If you were here !

## THE WILDERNESS

FROM Life's enchantments,  
Desire of place,  
From lust of getting  
Turn thou away and set thy face  
Toward the wilderness.

The tents of Jacob  
As valleys spread,  
As goodly cedars  
Or fair lign aloes, white and red,  
Shall share thy wilderness.

With awful judgments,  
The law, the rod,  
With soft allurements  
And comfortable words, will God  
Pass o'er the wilderness.

The bitter waters  
Are healed and sweet,  
The ample heavens  
Pour angel's bread about thy feet  
Throughout the wilderness.

## THE WILDERNESS

And Carmel's glory  
Thou thoughtest gone,  
And Sharon's roses,  
The excellency of Lebanon  
Delight thy wilderness.

Who passeth Jordan  
Perfumed with myrrh,  
With myrrh and incense ?  
Lo ! on His arm Love leadeth her  
Who trod the wilderness.

## PRISONERS

FATE, the gaoler, flung us down together  
In a dungeon by the sea ;  
Our ankles were sore fretted by the irons,  
We had nor file, nor key.  
Then of our hair we took the fine, soft tresses,  
And wove them carefully,  
And stooping down we swathed each other's fetters  
In webs of sympathy.

## GARDENING SONG

WHEN I am in my garden  
I am a monk of old  
Illuminating missals  
With blue and green and gold.  
In cunning burnish'd letters  
He wrote the Name of God,  
In daffodils and tulips  
I print it on the sod.

When I am in my garden  
I am of Aaron's race,  
A Levite, a precentor  
Who, in a holy place,  
For God's sake and for music's  
At Matins, Nones, and Prime,  
Sets every psalm and anthem  
To fitting tune and time.

When I am in my garden  
I am the bridegroom's friend,  
With charge of all the jewels  
That he delights to send ;



## GARDENING SONG

The turquoise myosotis,  
Narcissus, ruby-eyed,  
Imperial crowns of amber—  
I bear them to the bride.

When I am in my garden  
My heart's a truant lark,  
My humbler limbs bend earthward,  
I sing and serve till dark ;  
And when God takes the candle  
I rise from off my knee  
And hear the odours breathing  
The Name I cannot see.

When I am in my garden  
I am a monk of old,  
Illuminating missals  
With blue and green and gold.  
In cunning burnish'd letters  
He wrote the Name of God,  
In basil sweet and mignonette  
I print it on the sod.

## AT LAST

THIS is the wood oft visited in dreams,  
The longed-for scent of pines is in the air,  
And this the pictured beech whose foliage streams  
Like tresses of some mighty angel's hair.

But now, too late, my very feet may stand  
Where long the unsubstantial dream feet stood ;  
Regret hath marshalled here her phantom band,  
And left no place for joy in all the wood.

## HONOUR TO WHOM HONOUR

B RING burnished vessels and broidered vail,  
And a fair linen cloth for the board ;  
But you and I are the true San Graal—  
Mankind is the Cup of the Lord.

## GOD WILL COME HOME

G OD will come home to His saints,  
Come to them one by one,  
As down to puddle, and pool, and blot  
Comes home the infinite sun.

## A GREAT MYSTERY .

“ Shall I, the gnat which dances in Thy ray,  
Dare to be reverent ? ”

—COVENTRY PATMORE.

STRANGELY, strangely, Lord, this morning  
Camest Thou beneath my roof,  
Shorn of all Thy royal adorning,  
Stripp'd of judgment and reproof,  
The King of kings yet gladly scorning,  
Every plea but love's behoof.  
“ Can this be God ? ” I said, “ who enters,  
This be God who climbs my stair ?  
God sits high in heavenly centres,  
And though He hath us in His care,  
'Tis as His adopted children,  
Slaves redeemed from Satan's snare.  
God is mightier than the mountains,  
Far more majesty would wear,  
This One comes like summer fountains,  
Hath no snow upon His hair.  
With eagle pinions God will cover  
Those who seek for refuge there,  
But these are dove-like wings that hover,  
God was never half so fair.”

## A GREAT MYSTERY

Then with voice like falling water  
Viewless angels sang to me,  
Fear not thou, O virgin daughter,  
Thy King desires thy poverty.

At that "Ave Maria"  
I arose and I obeyed ;  
O my King Cophetua,  
I, Thy blessed beggar-maid,  
Who once lay among the potsherds  
Stand in silver plumes arrayed ;  
I, who lonely in the vineyards  
Morn and noon and evening strayed,  
Now am wrapt in Thine embraces,  
'Neath Thy banner "Love" am laid,  
Made partaker of Thy graces,  
I, the outcast beggar-maid.

No excuse and no invention  
Make me less unworthy Thee,  
No prostration, no pretension  
Of unique humility,  
But Thy glorious condescension  
Blazes through my misery,  
And Thy love finds full extension  
In the nothingness of me.  
Dark my soul, yet Thou hast sought her,  
My night allows Thy day to shine,

## A GREAT MYSTERY

Thou the grape art, I the water—  
Both together make the wine.  
I the clay and Thou the craftsman,  
I the boat and Thou the strand,  
I the pencil, Thou the draughtsman,  
I the harp and Thou the hand.

But the world with envy raging  
Fain would snatch me, Lord, from Thee,  
And Death and Hell their war are waging,  
Therefore go not far from me.  
By the mystery of this housel,  
By this momentary truth,  
By the love of this espousal,  
By this kindness of my youth,  
By Thy promise of remembrance,  
By that sweet perversity  
That makes my dark uncomely semblance  
Seem desirable to Thee—  
Leave me not lest faith should falter,  
O ! secure my fealty,  
I the victim on Thine altar,  
Thou the fire consuming me.

## AT BURPHAM

As when a maid awakes at matin toll,  
With mouth still pouted to a half-dreamt kiss,  
So, by this beauty strangely stirred, my soul  
Leans to some partly apprehended bliss.  
I dimly feel, and yet in vain would read  
The darling secret of this day's blue eye :  
Hear what the river tells the willow weed  
The while he weds her to the stooping sky.  
I only know this comes, O God, from Thee—  
A straying leaf from bays about Thy hair  
Or fragment of Thy raiment's broidery—  
Since none but Thou couldst leave a trace so fair.

For still we question every floating thing  
For news of absent Love's imperial wing.

## THE HIMALAYAS BY NIGHT

MY pathway seems the hem of very night,  
For nothing save a slender wooden fence  
Keeps me from utter space with blackness dense,  
A mouth of death, that never tasted light.  
Beyond the horrid gulf lies height on height—  
Darkness on darkness heaped ; and every sense  
Responds to something dreadful and immense—  
The crouching figure of incarnate Might.

Austere as fate and terrible as law  
The mountains stand and hide their breasts of snow  
Till longing winds of midnight fail and swoon.  
The spell increases—awful hands withdraw  
Each cloudy cloak—the veils are rent, and lo,  
The gleaming Titans naked neath the moon !



## SONG

**B**LAME the cuckoo that in June  
He cannot sing the April tune ;

Blame the flowers that at night  
The brightest is but pearly white ;

The earth that cannot keep till noon  
The kisses gathered from the moon,

But never blame thy fellow man  
If love should end as love began.

## FAMILIAR GRIEF, INTIMATE JOY

“Our sweetest songs are those  
That tell of saddest thought.”

—SHELLEY.

WHEN Grief has gone a-maying  
The thorns may show a tress,  
Dim waters be betraying  
The colour of her dress.

Grief doth not alway blind us,  
And men have read her eyes ;  
She sometimes falls behind us,  
That we may count her sighs.

Not so with Joy. None view him,  
Yet, when he takes his flight,  
Men rise up and pursue him  
To dumb and earless night.

## LOVE'S MORNING

I INTO the shadowland of Yesterday  
The night has flown on unreturning wings :  
This night whose moments were our golden strings  
Whereon those passionate melodies to play  
Of which the echoes all about us stay  
With hints of incommunicable things :  
This night, whereof no dawn oblivion brings,  
Nor any step of all our ultimate way.

So now, as one who leaves the Sacrament  
To read the Word, I loose thy hands, my sweet,  
That so my reasonable soul may greet  
And be conformed to thine—the day be spent  
In converse intimate, night find us blent  
In union more essential, more complete.

## HAUNTED

MY little child, how can you stand  
And fondle me and show no fears,  
Nor cease your undertone of song?  
You do not guess a ghostly hand  
Was stretched across the gulf of years  
And held these fingers all night long.

## THE LYCHGATE

THE very type of human love it stands,  
And offers men brief rest, a little space  
Wherein to press a kiss on folded hands  
And veil a fading face.

## ON QUARLEY DOWN

ON Quarley Down, on Quarley Down  
The trees grow straight, the trees grow tall,  
And there the Romans set their camp,  
And girdled it with moat and wall.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down  
A man may see three counties lie,  
But never an eagle standard flap,  
Nor a Roman foot pass by.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down  
A man may hear the wind and trees,  
But never a word of the Roman tongue,  
Nor a snatch of their martial melodies.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down  
An ancient bed I lay upon,  
For I lay sleeping in the moat  
Dug nigh two thousand years ago.

On Quarley Down, on Quarley Down  
The trees grow straight, the trees grow tall,  
And God send peace to those dead men  
Whose ditch is their memorial !

## WOMEN AND WOMEN

ALL women cry to men ; for some cry " Give ! "  
By day and night : a ravenous life they live,  
Devouring gift and giver ; then they die  
In giving birth to wailing misery ;

And some cry " Be—be men ! " : though few arise  
To do the bidding of their wistful eyes,  
Death to those virgins comes with Gabriel's wings,  
And from their dust the flower of manhood springs.

" WE STUDY TO UTTER OUR  
PAINFUL SECRET "

—EMERSON.

COMPLETE confession never yet was made,  
For truth is far too subtle for the tongue,  
Too fine and fluent even for the eye—  
The human heart is still unsaid, unsung.

## “GOD PLANTED A TREE”

I KNOW a far and quiet beech-crowned height  
Where rest abides. There, blue-grey boles  
among,  
The shy and fragile angel of delight  
May spread her wings. A misty arras hung  
Shuts out the troublous world, whose seething ill,  
Whose threadbare pleasure, sordid loss and gain,  
Reach not to that sequestered holy hill,  
Nor mar that vaulted silver-pillared fane,  
But there are hymned alone the mystic ways  
Of God. Wind instruments begin, and then  
The fallen leaves dance lightly to His praise,  
And infant buds leap up to cry “Amen !”

To that far shrine I went to woo the trees,  
Adore the pillars of the temple, bend  
Before the Monstrance, but as one who sees  
Its beauty only, not its use and end.  
Thy bough, blest beech ! received me—all my sighs  
Were hushed by healing breath that fanned my  
face,  
And, looking up, I saw thy steadfast eyes  
Grown deep with dreaming of unearthly grace.

## “GOD PLANTED A TREE”

From what high generous lineage art thou sprung ?  
Beneath what star conceived ? No heralds trace  
Thy long descent ; no bard hath ever sung .

The early exploits of thy noble race.  
The axe itself prevaieth not with thee,  
For though it rend, triumphant over loss,  
Thou still shalt serve in strong serenity,  
Shaped to man's cradle or his saving cross.

And yet thy last is still thy loveliest breath,  
Dying beneficent, transfigured, bright,  
Illuminating all the paths of death,  
Wrapped in a flaming sacrifice from sight !  
O tree, compact of earth and air and dew !

O happy tree ! instruct me in thy lore  
Of dying ever, being ever new ;  
To be in beauty fixed, yet evermore

To vary in the mode of beauty ; be  
Accosted by rude winds or winning tone  
Of passionate suns and moons most sisterly,  
Yet, buffeted or flattered, still to own  
Such peace, communicable, exquisite.

O tree, transcending earth and air and dew,  
O blessed tree, in beauty infinite,

Sweet harbour, friend unfailing, priest most true,  
Type of the tree whose leaves are healing balm  
For all the world,—conversing with the skies

Thy boughs have won this confidence and calm,  
This power on earth to breathe of Paradise !



## TEMPTATION

THE floods arise—O God, the floods arise,  
And wash my slain from out their burial sands;  
O hide me from the onslaught of their eyes,  
The frightful siege of their unhallowed hands!

## THE POINT OF VIEW

YOU think it noblest to refrain  
From songs of grief;  
You make a secret of your pain—  
Oh, unbelief!

Shall matron brows and necks be bare  
As those of girls?  
And shall the bride, then, never wear  
The Bridegroom's pearls?

## FROST

EARTH bows herself before the frost to-night,  
Her pleasant hair, the grass, is changed and white,  
Her songs are hush'd, her sighs have died away,  
She lies in silence, passive, cold, and grey.

The moon looks down. She scorns the shallow  
peace,  
The calm of Age, and cries : "Shall tumult cease  
Because a bird is dead, a brook is bound ?  
In me alone is final stillness found."

Yet other rest we craved, O pulseless Moon ;  
We sought the sunlit peace of summer noon,  
A glowing hour fulfilled with life and light  
And consummation won,—but lo, the night !

Our house of clay will soon be frosted o'er,  
Our fledgeling hopes lie dead upon the floor,  
And many a flower must fail, and fair device,  
And many a purling stream be sealed with ice.

## FROST

Yet safe in green recesses of the heart  
A passionate thrush still sits and broods apart ;  
And down in caverns where no frost assails  
The solemn voice of water still prevails.

Though Mirth and Tears, oh frosty Age, sleep well,  
And all seems quiet as a convent cell,  
Yet Life still wakes behind her curtains drawn,  
And sighs for spring and supplicates the dawn.

## WHEN LOVE CAME IN TO ME

THE raging, roaring, hungry blast  
    Shook land and sea,  
The blinding rain fell thick and fast,  
    And dread the thunder's minstrelsy :  
The lightning, flashing fell and bright,  
Alone relieved the rayless night  
    When Love came in to me.

My ruined hut upon the plain—  
    Ah, misery !—  
No shelter gave from wind or rain.  
    Love knocked. I cried, "Pass on, let be,  
Here dwell but want and wan despair."  
For bed and board and hearth were bare  
    When Love came in to me.

Love raised the latch. - Lo ! overhead  
    The ivy tree  
And traveller's joy a roof had spread,  
    The board was set full daintily ;  
The pine logs' blaze lit all the dome,  
The hut became a fairy home  
    When Love came in to me.

THE DEAD PRAISE NOT THEE,  
O GOD

WE are alone : the dead who sleeping lie,  
And I who mow the grass above their head.  
Since I still move, I say : "The dead—and I,"  
But had I thought of what it is to die,  
And what to live, I might have simply said,  
"We dead."

"IS IT NOT BRAVE TO BE A KING,  
TECHELLES?"

—TAMBURLAINE THE GREAT.

NOT wholly disinherited ! for sky  
And answering sea, for valley, plain and hill  
Still yield their tribute to my sovereign eye,  
And, Eden lost, I have some lordship still.

## COME BACK !

O H why did you heed, Eugene,  
The signs that she made to you ?  
Death is a coz'ning queen ;  
Why did you kiss her frozen face,  
Courting her ruthless iron embrace ?  
Come back, come back, Eugene, Eugene !

Come back in your youth, Eugene,  
Or come in your naked bones  
Out of your grave of green ;  
Come in your armour, clanking, bright,  
Come in your shroud, too long, too white—  
Come back, come back, Eugene, Eugene !

I listen all night, Eugene,  
For hoofs of a spectral horse,  
Into the dark I lean,  
Ready to ride with you and be  
Galloping out to eternity—  
Come back, come back, Eugene, Eugene !

The winds know your name, Eugene,  
They shriek it aloud, aloud ;  
Ah, though you lie between  
Breasts of the bride whom none desert,  
Leave her a moment, heal my hurt,  
Come back for me, Eugene, Eugene !

## TO EUGENE

**S**TILL keep the habit of your love,  
And if I reach the minaret  
Wherein the shining stairs are set,  
And lift my hungry eyes above,  
From some bright outpost look, and lean  
To welcome me, Eugene.

## PENIEL

**M**Y Rachel and my Benjamin, O Lord,  
Have passéd over with the flocks and herds.  
I watch with awful night beside the ford ;  
My hands are guilty. Stains of lying words  
Are thick upon my lips ; yet must I pray.  
Whether Thy Presence lame me, leave me dumb,  
Cast scales upon mine eyes, or slay me quite,  
My heart and flesh cry, " God of Bethel, Come ! "

## HEARTS AND SLEEVES

YOU fear I am too frank,  
And wear my heart upon a sleeve?  
Which heart? Which sleeve?  
Had I as many gowns to wear  
As Queen Elizabeth,  
I'd set a heart upon them all  
And still have hearts to spare.

"But then I often show  
A heart that grieves?"  
I know, I know;  
Out of the store within my breast  
I take one little throe,  
Like a button from a vest,  
And pin it on my arm.  
It hurts me less to wear it so,  
And—trims my sleeves.

The heart is like a vain coquette  
And drinks publicity like dew.  
Scatter her portraits broadcast, then  
Proclaim her eyes of blue,



## HEARTS AND SLEEVES

Her yellow hair,  
Her cheeks' red hue,  
Sing many things of her  
Or false or true,  
Perhaps the jade will then consent  
To stay at home with you.  
But he, who in his jealousy  
All portraiture denies,  
Is fooled the more,  
And while he tries  
To hide mere sketch or script,  
His very heart looks out at us  
From his two eyes.

## TO A STRANGER

YOU who turn to look on me,  
You seem to pity what you see ;—  
Lips on phantom kisses fed,  
Eyes familiar with the dead,  
Hands that clasp a shadow tight,  
Feet that track a lost delight,  
Breast where memory panting lies,  
Hair stirred by disembodied sighs—  
Yet you who turn to look on me  
You need not pity what you see :  
The valley's depth proclaims the height,  
The shadow testifies to light,  
Joy's noons are set 'twixt night and night ;  
And you, who turn to look on me,  
You see but what there *is* to see,  
And not what was or what will be.

## TO ONE LONG ABSENT

WHEN the Bridegroom comes with a surging  
sound,

And the wheels of His saints are as wind on the  
sands ;

When the hills and the valleys break forth and sing,  
And the trees are clapping their hands :

When the ships of Tarshish are safely moored,  
And our sons and our daughters come from afar—  
When Sharon's shepherds are folding flocks,  
And the myrtle displays her star :

When the warriors ride on their horses white,  
And the foremost is called "the Faithful and  
True"—

Will He chide if, ere I embrace His feet,  
I run and catch hands with you ?

## TO FAME .

ALAS ! for any Latmian boy who durst  
Excite thine ardours, Fame ! Thou wilt reject  
Him in an hour, and leave him, lone, accurst,  
To shiver through long winters of neglect.  
Capricious goddess ! hugging dead men's bones,  
Embracing scanty hair'd senility,  
Or dooméd youths, whose cruel death atones  
The strange bright sin of being loved by thee,  
Thy broideries are moss, thy borders mould,  
And all thy raiment smells of dust and clay,  
Thy brow is hard, thy narrow lips are cold,  
Thine eyes belie what thy false mouth doth say :

And yet, alluring mistress, turn awhile  
And snare me also with a single smile !

## TO A YOUNG POET

GO, like Hippolytus, to win thee bays  
In the Athenian games. Go, gather fame  
To splendid youth and beauty and the praise  
Of exile proudly borne, and make thy name  
Beloved of Artemis. Yet wear renown  
As one who needs it not, since that bright head  
The dignity of death too soon shall crown,  
And all thy comely locks be smeared with red.  
Or spread, Daedalian boy, thy pinions fair,  
And mount above our landmarks one by one ;  
But let thy proud wings court the middle air,  
And never flaunt them near the jealous sun.

Alas ! I see white limbs that ocean laves  
With all her sullen, unrelenting waves.

## “AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY”

WILT thou indeed raise up  
The former desolation,  
Give unto us the cup  
And garments of salvation?  
Thyself wipe off the tears  
Of those whom Thou hast beaten,  
Restore to us the years  
The canker-worm hath eaten?

Shall longing Tyre then clasp  
Her promised holy hiring?  
And shall a mortal's grasp  
At last fit his desiring?  
Shall life disclose no fang,  
And time no thorn discover?  
Shall beauty breed no pang,  
No change confound the lover?

Ah! what this sudden cloud  
The halcyon day belying?  
Lo! doves that call aloud  
Back to their windows flying;

## “AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY”

Men's hopes come home to roost,  
Men's hopes no longer mocking,  
From death's low dungeons loosed  
Back to their windows flocking.

For brass and iron alloy,  
Lo ! gold and silver flashes,  
For mourning—oil of joy,  
And beauty after ashes.  
For garb of heaviness  
The robes of praise enwoven,  
For dread of bitterness  
The sense of sweet things proven.

The spring shall have no frost,  
The summer heat no thunder,  
No early bloom be lost,  
No oak be riven asunder.  
To us shall then belong  
Joy's overflowing fountains,  
To us the midnight song  
And piping on the mountains.

The very glorious Lord,  
At whose step Carmel quivers,  
Shall be our Great Reward,  
Our place of streams and rivers ;

## “AN ETERNAL EXCELLENCY”

He, where no candles are,  
Shall be our Sun that shineth,  
Our bright and morning Star,  
Our moon that not declineth.

Is it indeed no fable,  
And shall we see God there,  
When death has made us able  
To breathe our native air ?  
O God our Help, O God,  
Our painful furrow keeping,  
May we so turn the sod  
So cast the seed ere sleeping,  
That we may have such reaping,  
Such laughter after weeping,  
Have harvest-home, and God !

## MEMORY

DEAR as the brief October sun,  
Or red fruit on the sombre yew,  
Or robin's song when summer's done,  
Is Memory.

Sharper than frost's two-edgéd breath,  
Or any wind that ever blew,  
More salt than all the Seas of Death  
Is Memory.



“SIC ITUR AD ASTRA”

THERE is no beauty on this earth  
But in dead beauty had its birth.  
When the bird beholds the sun  
A painted eggshell lies undone ;  
When the east is red with day  
A night of stars has passed away ;  
Every rose's open bloom  
Is a tender rosebud's tomb ;  
And where a man stands perfected  
There, a lovely boy is dead.  
Then let thy meaner joys be hire,  
And grudge not, for thy heart's desire ;  
And know that none hath been so wise  
He hath not seen the searching eyes  
And pallid features of Regret,  
Who, where the happiest are met,  
Will come in spite of wind or rain  
And stare in through the window-pane.

Yea, even mid the rapture sweet  
When Adam did our mother greet,

“SIC ITUR AD ASTRA”

He perchance must check a sigh  
For the pensive days gone by ;  
For those quiet tunnell'd places,  
Those vaulted, green and leafy spaces  
Where, beneath the speechless skies,  
With undiverted mind and eyes,  
On the silent moss he trod  
Alone among the works of God.

## CHRISTOPHER? OR SINBAD?

SINGING careless through the forest  
In the month of May,  
I met Love among the bracken  
And, all in wanton play,  
Flung the babe upon my shoulder,  
Carried him away,  
Singing careless through the forest  
In the month of May.

I bore Love upon my shoulder,  
The babe became a boy,  
Kept me merry with his laughter,  
With his manners coy ;  
And I went lightly through the forest,  
Sang low notes of joy,  
For that Love was on my shoulder  
And was grown a boy.

Love grew up, Love grew too quickly,  
His weight was hard to bear,  
And when I tried to toss him from me  
He held me by the hair,

## CHRISTOPHER? OR SINBAD?

Till I went softly through the forest  
Full of silent care,  
For that Love was grown a tyrant  
And was hard to bear.

My burden soon will sink or save me,  
The river is at hand,  
And, as I stumble on, I wonder  
If I shall win to land,  
And in what guise this Love I carry  
Will then before me stand,  
For I cannot see his features,  
And the river is at hand.

## TO FATE

THOUGH you should toss one up to heaven  
And hurl one down to hell,  
How say of two so interwoven  
Which rose or fell?

“FÜR DEN TOT IST KEIN KRAUT  
GEWACHSEN”

—*German Proverb.*

THERE grows no herb for death.  
We may not cull the leaf  
By light of noon  
Or midnight moon  
That can restore the breath  
Or win man back to grief.

When all green things were bred  
Great God withheld one seed,  
He kept from earth  
One noxious birth,  
And, pitying His dead,  
He disallowed one weed.

Though all men may disturb  
The pain whom once we slew,  
And lift his head  
From his low bed,  
And gather many a herb  
To quicken him anew,

## TOT IST KEIN KRAUT GEWACHSEN

Yet we shall lie full deep  
Where blows no teasing breath ;  
Nor pain nor men  
Shall wake again  
Whom God has put to sleep.  
There grows no herb for death.

## ACTUM EST !

AS one returning to native mountains,  
Treading buoyantly, firm and free,  
Drawing deep breath from ethereal fountains,  
So was I then enlarged in thee.

As one not thankless, yet scarcely heeding  
Song or silence, or rain or sun,  
Because of the pain of his two feet bleeding,  
So am I now, alone, undone.

## NOVEMBER TREES

O SAD November trees,  
Be not so fond in grief ;  
Came not the birth of this year's bud  
Through death of last year's leaf ?

## THE VENTURE

THE sea-gull sits and shivers  
Beside her narrow nest,  
Her cloudy pinion quivers,  
Her eyes in vain would test  
The strength of unsubstantial air,  
The truth of the inconstant sea :  
Shall she cleave to solid earth,  
Hug the cliff that saw her birth,  
Or those untempted regions dare,  
And venture utterly ?

Where eastern stars are gleaming  
Above an eastern hill,  
A mortal wanders dreaming  
And hesitating still  
Between the low imperious call—  
The soul's instinctive sovereignty—  
And all the slavish sense that prays  
For common things and trodden ways,  
Too cowardly to stake its all  
And venture utterly.



## THE VENTURE

The sea-gull flew to claim  
Two realms—the sea, the sky,  
And Abram's tent became  
The angel's hostelry.  
Ah then, though God seem vague as breath,  
And Creeds inconstant as the sea :  
Although thine Isaac be not born  
And all thy fellows cry in scorn,  
“See where the dreamer hunts the wraith !”  
Let instinct lead, spread wings of faith,  
And venture utterly.

## TO-DAY

THE air is burdened with the cry  
Of souls unblest,  
And darkened by the wings of those  
Who cannot rest.  
Peace ! 'Tis but a summer brood  
Pushed from the nest.

## THE DRYAD TO THE MOON

THY woodland lovers, O sovereign moon,  
Have sighed for the day's declining,  
They long to follow thy silver feet  
In the track of the dewdrops shining.

For thee the water her sweet breast bares,  
For thee wears the lily's adorning,  
In silent ecstasy holds thee close,  
Nor letteth thee go till morning.  
The lofty pines lift their heads to thee,  
Thy light on the lone yew lingers,  
For thy caresses the tortuous oaks  
Hunggrily stretch their fingers.  
The dainty, tremulous birchen tree  
Entreats thee with tender passion,  
And thou desirest her silver stem  
Her delicate branches fashion.  
Her fairy outline is thy delight  
And the sound of her fine leaves turning.  
Her leaves that stir in the wind of night  
That thou mayest still their yearning.

Thy love transfigures me too, O moon,  
And here in thy glorious glances  
My waving hand is a lotus bloom,  
My foot is a star that dances.

## “SIMETHA CALLS ON HECATE”

—OSCAR WILDE, *Theocritus*.

“SIMETHA calls on Hecate.”

For seldom have we mortals loved a god  
Or godlike gifts : we ask our little hod  
Of yellow earth, and leave the sword, the rod :  
Our cry is, “Send us now prosperity !”

“Simetha calls on Hecate.”

We have no title-deeds, and yet demand  
All fiefs. Like hounds we wait on Trivia's wand,  
And are not men enough to take command  
And be ourselves our fortunes' deity.

“Simetha calls on Hecate.”

We bring no precious first-fruits of the will,  
We lay no hand upon ourselves, but still  
With honey, sheep, and dogs the altars fill,  
And offer Heaven our crumbs of charity.

## TO FRANCIS THOMPSON

POET, whose footsteps led by "dreadful height"  
And loathsome floor of uttermost abyss,  
Whose deep eyes searched the sun and night in night,  
Whose lips knew golden philtres and the kiss  
Of leaning stars, wormwood and bitter gall—  
While now thy mortal feet lie eastward, still,  
Where do thy spirit's soundless footsteps fall?  
Pass they by some far peak or gleaming hill  
Of Paradise, where secret music swells?  
Or tread they where, through incensed arbours, flow  
Celestial streams? or where, by long-wished wells  
Of immortality, the amaranths blow?

Where'er they pass, save Peace, they cannot meet  
Aught wholly strange of bitter or of sweet.

## TO LIONEL JOHNSON

ALAS ! for the hearing of your ears,  
The visions of your bed,  
For the fruit of your lips, too soon withdrawn  
From a world on ashes fed.

Alas ! that the lamp God gave to you  
Was housed in an earthen jar,  
That the pitcher broke, and the light was spilt  
Like a November star.

But I think that Mary leaned from her place  
At the foot of the holy throne,  
And caught and kept the star that fell  
As a jewel for her zone.

## ON A CERTAIN SPINSTER WHO LINGERED IN CHURCH

NOT hers the hungry gaze of souls unwed ;  
Not hers the cold and narrow barren bed :  
Those virgin shoulders yet have pillowed men  
Who through her ministry grew strong again.  
She knows embraces both by night and day  
Beyond all price of intermingling clay.  
Man's weary cares upon her knees find rest,  
His secret hopes are hanging at her breast ;  
Therefore if long before the cross she bend,  
'Tis not that loneliness may find a friend,  
But that she takes so many with her there,  
And needs must wait till each have said his prayer.

TO J. C. P.

OUR instincts, not our memories, protest  
We are not wholly of this desert race  
Nor Bedouin born. Our infant lips were pressed  
To fairer bosoms formed with finer grace.  
Yet you and I, though aliens, have known  
And felt the allurement of the wilderness ;  
Drawn eerie comfort from the bleached bone,  
Since we in turn may share the grim caress  
Of this our tawny mistress, and may lie  
At last upon her large, indifferent breast.

Meanwhile we watch the mighty sunrise dye  
The hedgeless east, and yield to all the zest  
And glamour of great dawns. And we can fly  
Our strong-winged falcon, Hope, and bid her stray  
Through all the spaces of Infinity.

Not yet the sand hath choked us. We can play,  
(For thou hast fashioned me a lute,) and sing  
Faint songs beneath the tangled stars at night,  
And marvel what the next day's march may bring,  
And if to-morrow show the hills in sight.

Not all meet death in deserts. Men have found  
Strange midnight shelter, stranger midnight blaze,  
Clear springs and manna thick upon the ground,  
Undreamt-of caravans and homeward ways.

## A GRACE

FOR all the beryl, pearl and chrysoprase  
Wherewith the summer binds her brow ;  
The bleached raiment, meet for seraphim,  
That April hangs upon the bough ;  
For autumn mornings when the very stones  
Are steeped in amethystine light ;  
For lonely contemplations that endear  
The silent winter night ;  
For strength of youth, and charity of age ;  
For this life's myrrh and euphrasy,  
And those "sublime attractions of the grave"—  
Gloria Tibi Domine !



“THOU AWAY, THE VERY BIRDS  
ARE MUTE”

—SHAKESPEARE, *Sonnet*.

WHERE'S the former charm of the  
thrush's trills?

The remembered music of far-off rills?

The elfin dance of dead daffodils?

Their grace is fled. Could Demeter care—

Faint for Persephone's floating hair—

That flowers of Enna were strange and fair?

For cold and dark as a candle blown,

Bare as a nest when the birds are flown,

Are spring and summer to hearts alone.

## ON MEETING A REPROBATE

**S**MALL need to hang your head, avert your eye,  
Because, in good sooth, I am passing, I.  
For, though responsible for healthy blood  
And privilege of birth, what actual good  
Have I to set against your actual sin?  
There was so little you could lose or win  
As you know values, who were taught at school  
To reckon these in pounds (with many a rule  
For handling money you would never see),  
And made a bruté of some ability.  
For you the downs are but a place for sheep,  
And God's green grass is only so much "keep."  
For you no goat-foot Pan pipes by the lake,  
No shy, elusive dryad haunts the brake.  
You have no harp at noon beneath the trees,  
No harp like David's, and no melodies.  
For you no angels, when the tired larks cease,  
Take up the strain of joy, goodwill, and peace.  
You lead your sheep from fold to fold, nor think  
A Shepherd would lead you. You eat and drink,  
And fill your belly with the husks of swine,  
Because you never tasted Bread and Wine.

## ON MEETING A REPROBATE

We kept you out from Paradise because  
Ourselves were never there, nor do we pause  
From our muck-raking work to think, perchance,  
Clay is not all a man's inheritance.  
True, ev'n for you there was a better choice,  
I, too, wear sackcloth, when I might rejoice,  
And had you dared to turn your eyes on me,  
Mine must have dropped in shame and sympathy.  
You hang upon your cross in middle air,  
The cross of your misdeeds, but we who stare  
Upon your death, we gave the curséd wood  
And tools, our heads are heavy with your blood.  
O malefactor ! could you understand,  
I, fellow-thief, would ask to kiss your hand,  
And offer to your lips, if you would heed,  
A little sponge of love upon a reed.

## THE WANDERER

MY heart is homeless as the wind,  
And dark as northern waters are,  
More desolate than midnight pools  
That never held a star.

But like the uncompanioned sun  
That goeth forth from east to west,  
Or mourning, solitary moon  
Arising from her rest,

To climb the steepest hills of cloud  
Or sink upon an inland sea,  
Beyond the ramparts of the world  
I wander, lone and free.

I've heard the cry of dead men's bones  
That clamour at the gates of morn,  
And whimpering of naked souls  
Impatient to be born,

I know the dark and loathsome caves  
Of crouching Fear and writhing Shame ;  
And dreadful, oozy, songless swamps  
The words of sunken Fame.

## THE WANDERER

I've seen the shining galaxy  
Of mute, unrecognised worth,  
Apparent failures bursting through  
The envelope of earth.

I know the salt and bitter strand,  
The terrible No More's demesne,  
Lit by the cold, auroral flame  
Of things that might have been.

And in the silent polar night,  
With ear upon the icy ground,  
Behind the footsteps of Despair  
I've caught another sound,

Diffused as scent made audible,  
And faint as far-off foreign peals,  
The tread of final Destiny,  
Hope's golden chariot wheels.

### PS. CXIII. 9.

LORD, look upon my barren life,  
And send me fruitful agony,  
Till I, too, keep my joyful house  
With Faith and Hope and Charity.

## A PEOPLED SOLITUDE

THEY think I sit alone,  
But, at midnight bell,  
Goblin and fairy, ghost and sprite,  
Seem to beleaguer my cell,  
And wink and grimace where the weary light  
Is nodding. A babe might tell  
If I see aright.

They think I sit alone  
Day after day,  
But angels perhaps pass to and fro  
(Sweet angels, disdain not, I pray !),  
Only the dying and new-born know—  
Our eyes are obscured with clay ;  
But it may be so.

They think I sit alone  
At peace and still ;  
But ever the Serpent and holy Rood  
Strive in this hut on the hill,  
Corruption and health in my mortal blood,  
And darkness and light in my will—  
Ah, pray that the end be good !

## HEAL MY HANDS!

LORD, near Thy cross, as men count nearness,  
My cross stands,  
And tortured like Thine own, and bleeding,  
Are my hands.

Thine were wounded in the dwelling  
Of Thy friends,  
Yet rich blessing in their crimson  
Dew descends.

And from Thy tree Thy hands are plucking  
Fruit of bliss ;  
Mine, in life and death, are empty—  
All amiss.

Ah ! how little it beseemeth  
Me to rail,  
Whose own fingers drew the cordage,  
Drove the nail !

Yet, remember, Lord, and pity  
These my bands,  
And when Thou comest to Thy Kingdom,  
Heal my hands.

## “BANDS IN DEATH”

WHEN you shall hear that I am dead,  
And slaves of “Use and Wont” have seized  
their prey,  
And laid me primly on the bed,  
Come to my help and send them all away.

Take the bound wrists and fling them wide,  
Release the fettered feet and plaited hair ;  
Toss all Death’s livery aside,  
And throw the chamber open to the air.

I would have done with “decencies”  
And all the petty furniture of life,  
The thin deceits and vanities,  
The impulse and the action still at strife.

A corpse dressed out ! A sorry sight—  
A coffin too ! “The prisoned bird has fled ;  
Then bind the cage”—for men by right  
Are gaolers, turnkeys even of the dead.



## “BANDS IN DEATH”

You, too, have loathed captivity,  
The fretting rules and regulated days,  
And you would give me liberty,  
A brief release from goads and harnessed ways.

Shall these unsated hands be blest  
By simulating folded hands that pray ?  
The head, uncomforted, find rest  
Upon a pillow made of churchyard clay ?

Commit me to the troubled sea,  
The bed of rocking waves, the roof of cloud,  
While loud winds wail an elegy,  
And swaying seaweed weaves a sheet and shroud.

But I bethink me how the Lord,  
The Lord of glory suffered clothes and bands,  
The prying eyes, the probing spear,  
And left His body to men's busy hands.

Out, out upon this wretched pride !  
The rude, rebellious heart at last obeys ;  
Conditionless I take the tide,  
Girt with the fisher's coat of human ways.

Ah God, upon the midnight lawns !  
Oh God, on floods below and hills above,  
Meet us again when morning dawns  
With food prepared, the only food of love !

## TO THE BOY BRIAN

THE poppy has spread out her petticoat red,  
The little moon lily has lifted her head,  
The flax blows blue as a fairy sea,  
All waiting for thee.

The jewelled and delicate butterfly knows  
Where the iris, his equal in loveliness, grows,  
The snapdragon bends to the weight of the bee—  
They are wiser than we.

The scornful sun on his chariot throne  
Makes mock of a lover left waiting alone,  
Then hurries to westward with mischievous glee ;  
Be fleetier than he.

Already the shadows are far too long,  
The robin is hinting at evensong ;  
Why should the moon my solitude see ?  
Come quickly to me.

## A CHILD'S THOUGHTS

### I

WHEN I'm grown up and children talk a little,  
I'll never say, "You drive me wild,"  
Nor answer them, "Whatever next, I wonder!"  
Nor yet, "Good Heavens, what a child!"

### II

When I go to bed I think of the wood,  
And the still, dark pond by the willows,  
Where the moorhen sits on her islet of roots  
With the cold, damp sticks for pillows.  
She sits alone by the sleeping pool,  
She looks at the sky and ponders,  
She broods on her eggs and covers them all,  
And looks at the sky and wonders—  
She thinks the stars were the eggs of the moon,  
And wonders to see them hatched so soon.

## “HIS WAYS ARE EVERLASTING”

“The perpetual hills did bow. . . .  
The deep uttered His voice.”

O H holy One of everlasting ways,  
Who in the primal, dim, unmeasured days  
Called hill to hill from chaos, deep to deep !  
Thou leddest Abram to the larger air,  
The infinity of faith, and built a stair  
For angel throngs where Jacob lay asleep.

And when the human soul, Thy chosen bride,  
Would cast her bands, be free and purified,  
Thou makest water stand upon a heap ;  
Yea passion's floods that overwhelm th' opposing host  
Are but Thy walls and ways, O Holy Ghost,  
Who callest hill to hill and deep to deep.

But ah ! in what fair grove, Eternal Wind,  
Didst Thou the lowly maiden Mary find,  
Like some rich blossom ripe for all Thy will ?  
What load of joy weighed down her body fair  
Until the ground might kiss her braided hair ?  
The deep shall tell the deep and hill tell hill.

## “HIS WAYS ARE EVERLASTING”

In favour highest she, but not alone,  
Since unto thee all virgin souls are known :

By Ganges' banks, or China's farthest steep,  
Or where the vulture is the Persian's tomb  
Thou overshadowest the spirit's womb,  
Still calling hill to hill and deep to deep.

Yet, since we see Thee but through clouds of night,  
Like Psyche, we mistrust our true delight,  
And fear to wed a troll, a shape of ill ;  
But Thou art Husband to our human race,  
And shalt discover all Thy wondrous grace  
When deep hath fled to deep and hill to hill.

Oh ! come and help us through the toil and grief  
That soon shall expiate our unbelief ;  
And when all tears are wept that we must weep,  
Then bid our fig-trees blossom once again,  
Our vines to bear, our fields to flush with grain,  
Till hill shall laugh to hill, deep sing to deep.

## A ROSE

THY purpled petals are like angels' lips,  
Thy heart's a fragment of some lonely star,  
Thy fragrance is the essential sweet of hope,  
And thou a pledge whence all perfections are.

## DESTINY

O LEAVE the lonely fortress of my heart  
I cannot yield to thee,  
But merrily the gates had swung apart  
If thou hadst held the key.

## A PENITENT TO HIS NEIGHBOURS

SMILING I answer : " Is that all ? "  
To the worst that you can say of me ;  
I owe my conscience countless pounds,  
Then what's your halfpenny ?

## THE BRANDED HEART

I SAW where women's hearts were hung,  
Like fruit upon a tree,  
And Time himself leaned on his scythe  
And eyed them wearily.

One heart hung there so deeply marked,  
So eaten by the flame,  
That all its substance seemed to be  
One sole consuming name.

And men cried out, "Find us such hearts  
That our names, too, be hid  
Within and heralded without!"  
But Time said, "God forbid!"

"None ever branded deep as this  
In the wholesome light of day,  
Nor wielded tools so fiercely hot  
To go unscathed away."

## LE MARIAGE DE CONVENANCE

THE cost of it ! The waste of it !—this wrings  
My heart. To barter love for things, things,  
things !

You stand begirt with all your household store,  
Yet shiver, naked to the very core.  
Why, ev'n from workhouse wards may come a strain,  
A song and laugh—you will not sing again.  
How oft, with shame and pity, have you read  
Of wretched girls who sell themselves for bread,  
But who shall win you back to decency  
Who sold yourself for superfluity ?  
You give your money to the madhouse too,  
But is the wildest there as mad as you ?  
Upon a dead swan's down the head is pressed  
That might have known a living lover's breast ;  
And from the gold of life you turned away  
To build yourself a tomb of yellow clay.



“NOT IN THE ABUNDANCE OF  
THINGS”

GIVE men houses fair and costly,  
Raiment white,  
Let the board be spread at even,  
The bed at night—  
Will they sing?

Give them stalléd ox and fatlings,  
Oil and wine,  
Give them purple, silk and linen,  
Let the sheets be fine—  
They will not sing.

Paul and Silas thrown in prison,  
By men accurst,  
Fettered, naked, bleeding, threatened,  
Hungry, cold, athirst—  
These could sing.

## THE LADY OF REVERIE

A LADY sat in her carven chair ;  
The firelight lit her braided hair,  
Showed her gown of antique grace  
And dainty collar of Flanders lace :  
Showed her features wan and fair  
And the lines that life had chiselled there :  
Showed her slender finger tips  
And the baffling smile upon her lips.  
Within the fire she seemed to trace  
Ghosts of all that once took place,  
Phantoms in procession glow,  
Phantoms from the long ago,  
That paled her cheek, and lined her brow,  
And left her sitting lonely now  
With a strangely pensive air  
All alone in her carven chair.

Should I discover her heart, 'twere sin,  
And hardly the lady dare look therein ;  
Something I see mysterious, dark—  
(Is it costly shrine, or curious ark ?)

## THE LADY OF REVERIE

Wrapped about with flame and cloud,  
(Is it a vail, or is it a shroud ?)  
Shapes of darkness, powers of night  
Strive for it, and forms of light.  
O Mary Mother ! to love so well,  
Is it Heaven, or is it Hell ?  
For full of fate as death is love,  
That coming softly like a dove  
Upon his prey yet swoops and springs  
With eagle beak and eagle wings,  
Tears the heart o' the victim out,  
Bears it hither, thither, about ;  
Stabs it, tries it every way,  
And if aught therein be clay,  
Hurls it down from fearful height,  
Down, down, down to dawnless night.

So she sits with her bleached hair,  
And chiselled features wan and fair,  
Thinking on the spectres ghast  
Phantoms from a far-off past ;  
Sits with a strange fantastic air  
All alone in her carven chair,  
Her head propped on her finger tips,  
And a baffling smile upon her lips.

## LIFE RECONCILING TO DEATH

“ Worn with toil and spent,  
With many a painful step to other shrines.”

—*Eumenides*: POTTER'S Translation.

WHEN first with morning step we roam,  
What magic dreams beguile  
Our search to find a fairy home,  
A fabled isle !

Ere noon we have relinquished all  
Such dreams, and turned apart  
To seek a chamber in the wall  
Of one poor heart.

And then a humbler hostelry  
Befits us, travel sore,  
Where never enters Memory,  
So low the door :

A cave of silence, strewn with cloud,  
To baffle Sorrow's feet,  
Secure alike from thunder loud  
Or pulse's beat.

E SEMPRE BENE

BUT shall we not grow tired of joy  
When bitter things are passed away ?  
And will not love and beauty cloy  
If unrelieved day after day ?

Fear not ! The memory of tears  
Shall lend a fresh delight to bliss,  
And lips, once wrung, through all the years  
Shall be astonished at each kiss.

TO LEWIS CARROLL, WHO HAD  
INVITED ONLY THE "VERY  
YOUNG"

I WISH that I had dared to come and see  
Whether you would have frowned or smiled.  
Have cried, "Avaunt, avaunt, Methusalah !"  
Or said, "God bless you ! little child."

## SONG

*Χαῖρε*

AS a quiet night on discordant sound,  
As a gentle rain on a thirsty ground,  
As a shadow falling where hart's-tongue grows,  
As a sunbeam wooing a folded rose—  
Thy coming was sweet.

As the petals of poppies the wind has tossed,  
As the flitting of swallows before the frost,  
As the passing of dew in the morning light,  
As the rush of the deer on a northern height—  
Thy going was fleet.

## BETHLEHEM

FOR Paten and for Chalice  
The crib of a humble beast—  
Then bow the knees of thy spirit  
To the majesty of the least.

Ἀφένται

O WAVE and wind ! O bee and chanting bird,  
O angels, making harmony in Heaven,  
What music have ye like that single word  
Reserved for mortal ears, the word Forgiven !

But if again we own the sins of youth,  
Rewrite the bitter script which Love had riven,  
Then worst of all intolerable shames,  
Most poignant of reproaches is—"Forgiven !"

## ALLEGRA AND TRISTITIA

TRISTITIA, the dark, the pale,  
Walking in night's solemnity,  
Wearing the midnight's mystery  
For coif and veil,

Stole all my heart away from me.  
I loved her languor and her tears,  
And served for her through seven years  
Of slavery.

And then I seemed to clasp my prize,  
And triumphed all the bridal night,  
Until the over hasty light  
Revealed her eyes.

Alas ! 'twas not Tristitia,  
'Twas not the bride I thought to see,  
Only Allegra lay by me—  
For Rachel, Leah.

Yet had she seemed to lack no grace  
Until I saw those purblind eyes,  
Until the daylight taught me sighs,  
Showed me her face.



## ALLEGRA AND TRISTITIA

"She is the elder," so they said,  
"Let all her rites be duly done  
Then may Tristitia be won,  
Then Rachel wed."

I won those eyes of strange desire,  
Those eyes like wells, upon whose brink  
A man may lean and drink, and drink,  
Nor ever tire.

But now the spurned, the courted bride  
Have gone—the happiness that failed,  
And the sorrow that prevailed,  
Alike have died.

Both women bare tall sons to me,  
And God shall light Allegra's eyes  
As when the summer suns arise  
On Galilee.

My pilgrimage is almost o'er,  
Tristitia hath made me wise,  
But lay me where Allegra lies  
For evermore.

## BETHINK THEE !

“ Wonder it is to see in diverse minds  
How diversely love doth his pageants play.”

ERE thou begin to love, choose well the school  
Wherein to graduate, the fitting rule.  
For wilt thou love with traitors who forswore  
Themselves at Argos and at Elsinore,—  
Set sword and serpent and the funeral pyre  
For milestones on the road of thy desire ?  
Wilt thou infect thy passionate lips and breath,  
And be the cup that holds thy Juliet's death ?  
Condemn to rosemary and asphodel  
A Sigismonde or gentle Isabelle ?  
Wilt thou, with Paris, set a world at strife,  
Or give, with Perseus and Alcestis, life ?—  
With Orpheus half redeem Eurydice  
Or be thy Psyche's immortality ?

“I SAID: I AM CUT OFF”

AFTER the purple draught of bliss  
It were less hard to drink of painful death ;  
But I must die a chrysalis,  
My wings must never know the summer's breath.

QUI TRANSTULIT SUSTINET

WHEN we would count the tale of years  
And know if all our suns be set,  
We have no medicine for our fears  
Save “Qui transtulit sustinet.”

“O SOVEREIGN LORD, THOU LOVER  
OF MEN’S SOULS”

THOU hope of all Humanity,  
What of all this that meets the sight,  
The blood, the tears, the misery ?  
Raiment of needlework outspread  
Wrought curiously with golden thread,  
That my bride may be fitly adorned to-night.

But, oh thou Bridegroom of the Soul,  
What of the sounds, the sounds of fear,  
The groans of men, the bells that toll ?  
Thou hearest the minstrels tune their lutes,  
Thou hearest the young men try their flutes  
For the feast of the marriage that draweth near.

Yet, oh thou Bridegroom of the Soul,  
What of the mind’s captivity ?  
What of the spirit’s doubt and dole ?  
Out of the ebony halls of night,  
Aloes, cassia, myrrh, delight,  
The bride in her palace of ivory.

## O SOVEREIGN LORD

Then, oh thou Bridegroom of the Soul,  
What of the songs from woods new-clothed,  
The laughing flowers, the sunlit knoll ?

My footsteps that follow along the shore,  
My fingers about the latch and door,  
My face at the window of my betrothed.

## THE LAST SCENE

HER lily skin, her bronze-red hair  
Glowed brightly from her dying bed,  
No wonder that Death coveted  
A thing so radiantly fair.  
Her many friends must watch and pray  
And chafe her hands and soothe her head,  
And care for her till she be dead.

She was forsaken night and day,  
She was forsaken of her breath,  
And half forsaken, too, by Death,  
Who only took her soul away :  
Her poor, dark soul, unwashed, unfed,  
And left her body lying there,  
For all it was so white and fair.

## THE ONE OBLIGATION

CARE not so much for troth to me  
As for thine own integrity,  
Lest I be robbed of my delight,  
Which is to know thou art alway  
(With me or with another may),  
A “very parfait gentle knight.”

## A DISCLAIMER

YOU said that love should be your diadem—  
Love never put that brand upon your brow.  
That it should be your Star of Bethlehem—  
Love did not lead you where you wander now.

## “THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH”

O BRIDE most blessed ! If, as many say,  
The ardour of thy first betrothal be  
A little quieted, yet, day by day,  
Approaching nearer to maturity,  
Conforming to His likeness unaware,  
And tuned to His accord,  
Thou canst more intimately share  
The counsels of thy Lord.

Mother belov'd ! With laver and with bread,  
With patient ear and white, maternal knees ;  
For every child a green and quiet bed,  
And all his Father's wealth beneath thy keys ;  
Well may the Enemy of souls deplore  
Thy presence on the earth,  
And angels, wondering, adore  
The Love that gave thee birth !



## A ROOT OF DOUBT

YOU doubt if there be any God ?  
Doubt is the torpid man's complaint ;  
Still hibernating 'neath your clod,  
Your sins and virtues grow too faint.  
But come where life is all ablow :  
Be a murderer, or a saint,  
And you will know.

## IN GADARA

WE'VE heard about the loaves and fishes,  
Cana's wine ;  
We've seen Thee giving life and reason,  
But wilt Thou give us swine ?

## COME AWAY !

AH, love ! Come away with me  
To where the purple islands be ;  
To islands in the Southern sea,  
Where the kindly breadfruit grows  
And the red hibiscus blows,  
Come away with me !

Come soon, for fear of death, the thief ;  
Make me a bed of fern and leaf  
Where I may sleep away my grief :  
Sleep away the sad fatigue  
Lying southward league on league,  
Come, for time is brief.

And I in turn will heap thee high  
The scented leaves and grasses dry,  
And at my lord's feet softly lie  
Till the peerless Southern dawn  
Call to some enchanted lawn  
New delights to try.

## COME AWAY !

And then to range the island round  
And share the harvest we have found  
Beside our fire upon the ground ;  
    Till reflected in thine eyes,  
    Fairer stars than these arise,  
So may joys abound !

Come, love ! Come away with me :  
If we return all men shall see  
The afterglow of ecstasy !  
    In our eyes a light, a gleam,  
    Deep within our eyes a dream,  
A magic memory.

## BAFFLED

W HENEVER I am fain to bless  
    My Solitude, my chosen bride,  
Behind, before her, or beside  
    I see her shadow, Loneliness.

## SALISBURY PLAIN

WHEN hurricanes blow I love to be hurled  
On that eerie plain  
Where the wind in pain  
Wanders with wolfish eye ;  
Where the peewits fly  
With their mournful cry,  
Like souls from the underworld.

Where the spirits of dead men under the sod  
At midnight deep  
Are awaked from sleep  
To whirl in the wind and wail ;  
And the pillars pale  
Tell their awful tale  
Of the wrestlings of man with God.

## BLIND, YET MAKING MANY SEE

SHE brought with her the freshness of the morn,  
The vivid beauty of a harvest scene ;  
Her glowing skin was like the ripened corn,  
Her lips the poppies that do blow between.  
All dusky was her hair, as when there lies  
Deep shadow underneath the elms, a boon  
To weary reapers in the scorching noon ;  
And lo ! God's peace was laid upon her eyes.

Her presence had the richness of a rose  
That blooms alone in some still garden place ;  
She moved melodiously, as water flows,  
And tranquil visions floated round her face,  
Or like fine odours drifted from her gown,  
Of English lanes, and hazel-shaded stiles,  
Or gabled roofs, and fluted, crimson tiles  
Of some old water-fondled, Flemish town.

Men saw no more the blinding stony street,  
But stood where beeches build the fanes of rest ;  
They heard no more the tramp of aching feet,  
But sound of some cool stream across whose breast  
In sweet abandonment a willow lies.

She had day's radiance with the calm of night,  
And few despair of peace who saw the light  
Wherewith God starred the darkness of her eyes.

## PROUD LOVE

PROUD love is not a foaming tide,  
And if you would be delicate,  
Come only to the water side  
And dip your dainty feet therein ;  
Among the shallows hesitate,  
No lawless wave will kiss your chin.

But if adventure stir your blood,  
And you are proof against regret,  
Plunge in and float upon the flood  
And travel down through banks of green  
To seas you have not tempted yet,  
And lands you have not seen.

## THE SCHOOLMISTRESS

IF she, their nurse, be faint with famine,  
How shall the foster babes be fed ?  
Lead her, O God, where Cherith floweth,  
Bid birds and angels bring her bread.

## BENEATH THE JUNIPER

AH Lord, in vain did I aspire  
To serve. Now to be dead  
Is all I ask,  
All my desire—  
And lo, the angel's bread,  
The crowning task  
Cleft floods, and chariots of fire !

## EXPERIENCE

NO pain can nullify the boon of birth,  
And who would take the sweet, yet grudge  
the dole,

Have Jacob's dream, yet shun his bed of earth,  
Prevail with God, yet keep the sinew whole?

For forty days on Horeb's awful height

Who would not barter Eshcol's vintage rare,

Pomegranates, figs, the long expected land,

Yea all that Nebo showed the straining sight

Of storied woods, deep streams and pastures fair,

From Jordan's banks to Sharon's blinding strand?

Who would not brave the whirlwind and the fire

(Most dreadful prelude !) for the dulcet tones

And single music of a silver lyre

As God Himself His fearful servant owns?

Who would not as a thunderbolt be hurled

To blast a perjured queen and impious king,

To blaze on Carmel terrible and grand,

Arouse a woman-cowed and craven world,

Feed from a raven's or an angel's wing,

Then flash back flaming to the Hurler's Hand.



## EXPERIENCE

I would not shirk the hour of deep despair  
    Beneath the juniper, nor that fierce grief  
The patriarch on Mount Moriah bare,  
    While yet the watching Heaven withheld relief ;  
But not to suffer basely, would I crave,  
    Clinging to Sodom spite of angel goad  
    And hand ; or clamouring for quails, to find  
Therewith leanness of soul : a murmuring slave,  
    Desiring Canaan, fearful of the road,  
    And fretful for the fleshpots left behind.

## TO LIFE

THE keen pursuit is more than captive prey,  
    Mine be the ringing steel, the flashing sword ;  
I claim the fight, and not the victor's bay—  
    Then sound the onset !   Chance the last award !

“PRO PATRIBUS TUIS NATI SUNT  
TIBI FILII”

SING not for ever of the isles of Greece,  
Or seven purple hills of glorious Rome,  
Here Jason seeks the golden Colchian fleece,  
Here Aphrodite rises from the foam  
And she-wolves suckle heroes, though thine eyes  
Turn only where forgotten sunsets linger in the skies.

Apollo did not always pipe ; his hand  
Could be as vile as carrion vulture's beak.  
Uncomely showed Absyrtus on the strand,  
And Atreus' dish whereat the sun grew weak.  
Looked Pentheus lovely whom his mother tore,  
Or those red limbs the Thracian women left by  
Hebrus' shore ?

And when to silent stars the lone bird sings  
In trembling ecstasy, and uttereth  
All dimly comprehended hidden things,  
The sting of life, the secret sweet of death,  
The fount of love that fills pale sorrow's well,  
Why then remember Itys' horrid fate or Philomel ?

## PRO PATRIBUS

And yet—the lips caress each honied name  
Enamoured of its sweetness. Glamour lies  
Like rainbow lighted mist around each fame :  
Diana's swift white limbs and wide grey eyes,  
Young Adon's wishless boyhood, 'Thetis' feet  
Revealed for one bright moment as when two streams  
meet

An odour fugitive and sudden gleam  
Show where the careless and impetuous spray  
Has caught a rose that fell across the stream ;  
Or hamadryads at their lilting play,  
Half seen and half suspected by some shy  
And virgin shepherd lad, with flower-swept feet and  
dew-washed eyes

Not unprepared for such encounter sweet.  
In those days reeds sang lyrics, one might lend  
The long day to their hearing, screened from heat  
By laurels with whose fragrant sighs still blend  
Apollo's kisses, till, all silently,  
Love's star appeared and day was rounded off with  
ecstasy.

Across the years and o'er the seas that beat  
Between is wafted still a subtle scent,  
Amaracus and lilies pressed by feet  
Of unreturning deities. And, blent

## PRO PATRIBUS

With music of their passing robes, is breath  
Of ambergris and spikenard which yet clings, as  
when rough death

Has carried some devoted maiden where  
Her beauty needs no veil, after long years  
One takes her raiment, laid aside with care,  
And shakes it out, and notes, mid blinding tears,  
Aroma of the rose and lavender,  
So with the speaking of each lovely name rich odours  
stir.

Not distance, merely, can distil such balm,  
But those inhabitants of fairy skies,  
Of far-off seas and fabled isles, with calm  
Unruffled brow, firm step and level eyes,  
Moved each toward a well-determined goal  
Of passion or revenge, of life or death, and fed the  
soul

With her desire, unfettered by the fear  
Of sin ; and not as we, who hardly long  
For heav'n, but faint and tremble at the drear  
Alternative of hell. They knew no wrong  
But impotence. Their happy race attained  
The days of pearl, the perfect days of childhood all  
unstained,

## PRO PATRIBUS

Untroubled, by the restlessness and fret,  
The feverish approach of nubile age,  
But we have lost our early grace, nor yet  
Have won the strength of manhood, nor the sage  
And quiet temper of maturity ;  
Yet wistful retrospect will never conquer destiny,

For all those darling, dreamlike days are fled.  
No Hercules may snatch them from the past  
Nor any Orpheus charm. For "Pan is dead,"  
As when the silver moon is sunk at last  
No more her frown, nor mystic smile can sway,  
But fickle time neglects her for her golden rival—day.

The gods have left Olympus. No green sod  
Shall kiss their feet again ; no golden shore  
Shall woo them from the wave. What then if God,  
Tired of the fitful intercourse of yore,  
Should come within the scope of human ken,  
Should leave His lonely height to dwell familiarly  
with men ?

What if He be among us but so near  
As hardly to be visible at all ?  
We wait the seeing eye, the hearing ear,  
And Samuel's heart to heed the midnight call :  
A Homer singing of a nobler host,  
And new Theophanies, in Iliads of the Holy Ghost.

## PRO PATRIBUS

One who shall sow with green our barren floor  
And plant with roses all the ways of Death,  
Disclose the pearls of pain, and golden ore  
Of twice-blessed grief, until with even breath  
We take the road, and scorn our former sloth  
And stall-fed ease ; not flinching like untutored colts  
who, loath

To face some fancied danger, leave the way,  
And, plunging down the precipices, woo  
Their own destruction. All our singers say  
Life is unlovely now, and poor, yet who  
Will die ? What Curtius or Antigone ?  
Of those who most do chant the bygone age's elegy

Will any burn, with Scaevola, a hand,  
Or sacrifice a breast with those who ruled  
Along the Euxine shore ? And if our land  
Yield less voluptuous gifts, are we more schooled  
In Spartan use, and that ascetic fair  
Men saw in young Hippolytus, like aureole on his hair ?

Reluctantly we own we know the goal  
And way. For all must see the long white road  
The prophets laid. There, conscience doth patrol  
To smite with two-edged sword and flaming goad  
All wandering feet. And though in search of ease  
Some seek enticing plains, they hear the burden of the  
breeze,

## PRO PATRIBUS

The blood of brothers crying, and they dread,  
Lest after all, a God can hear it too.  
But hand in hand the happier pilgrims tread,  
And have the Mount Delectable in view,  
The strongest tarry most to help the weak,  
And make no anxious haste, as having that which yet  
they seek.

And some no vision cheers, and yet they keep  
Their upward course, nor care to turn them back ;  
They doubt the end, but love the way—the steep  
Ascent—the grandeur of the Alpine track—  
And prize one little gentian's sapphire sea  
Beyond all lowland blaze of marigold or peony.

Their songs are in their heart. But those who run  
Astray for every bird and butterfly,  
When lying in some thorny pit, undone,  
Can utter many a studied plaintive cry.  
Left in the desert they in vain would think  
They hate the way to those clear springs of which  
they will not drink.

A "God in perfect beauty," Him we seek ;  
The living rose that must excel the bloom  
On any painted page. Our eyes are weak ;  
Our childish taste, trained in the gaudy room  
Of sensual joys, rejects the Perfect Word,  
The things eye hath not seen, nor heart conceived,  
nor ear hath heard.

## PRO PATRIBUS

Yet we have had our Francis and Terése,  
Our Bernard, Galahad, and Joan of France,  
And even now in many hidden ways  
Walk heroes, though no halo of romance  
Can crown them, till the poet whom we wait  
Shall lead us to the future through his golden arch  
and gate.



FROM THE FRENCH OF  
LOUISE LABÉ

EACH night my spirit is a homing bee,  
And scarcely waits till Sleep, at eventide,  
Has thrown the gates of Time and Distance wide,  
Before it flies, incontinent, to thee.  
Then do I seem to know felicity ;  
Then comes the consummation long denied,  
And on this heart so often racked and tried  
Another heart is beating tenderly.

O fair and gentle Sleep ! O Night of gold,  
Sweet Rest, and Fancy dear as summer dew,  
Still weave your webs about the selfsame theme.  
And if my longing arms may never hold  
Substantial love ; if waking Truth refuse,  
At least let Semblance bless me in a dream !

## FROM GOETHE

THE heights are wrapped in sleep,  
Hill on hill.

Hushed is the forest deep,  
Songless and still.

From East to West

One stirless, dreamless noon,

Ah wait ! Soon, soon

Thou too shalt rest.

## ALL SOULS DAY

FOUNDED ON THE GERMAN OF FERDINAND VON SAAR

WILD and wan, and chill,  
It is the Feast of Souls !  
A cold grey cloud  
For sheet and shroud  
Wraps God's Acre on the hill,  
Where the folded dead lie still—  
It is the Feast of Souls !

The twinkling grave-lights shine  
Upon the steep hillside,  
As though night shed  
Above the dead  
Her stars for tears, and kind hands twine  
Emblem, wreath, and funeral vine  
Upon the steep hillside.

With consecrated flame  
Each sepulchre is lit,  
And hung with thought  
Of flowers caught  
In bronze or marble. Each can claim  
Some share in memory or fame,  
Each sepulchre is lit.

## ALL SOULS DAY

What of the homeless dead ?  
What of the nameless ones  
Who knew no bier,  
No tender tear,  
Whose far, unechoing footsteps led  
From birth to death uncomforted—  
What of the nameless ones ?

Ah ! thoughts are dedicate  
To-day to those unknown.  
One, worn with life,  
Distress and strife,  
As they were, and as desolate,  
Stands shuddering, compassionate,  
And in their dark and silent fate  
Anticipates his own.

TO A CERTAIN GOOD GENI

OF these, my fancies argosies,  
Yours are the deepest laden ships.  
You know the spell that launched them all—  
A kiss upon the lips.



BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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